In the Claims:

Please amend the claims, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An optical ~~Optical~~ system ~~(10; 20)~~ for a charged particle multi-beam system, comprising:

an electrostatic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having ~~(12) comprising~~ at least two electrostatic sub-lenses; and

a magnetic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having ~~comprising~~ at least two magnetic sub-lenses, wherein ~~whereby~~ the sub-lenses share a common excitation coil ~~(15)~~;

wherein the electrostatic and the magnetic lens component form ~~forming~~ a multi-lens for a plurality of charged particle beams having ~~comprising~~ at least two sub-lenses; and

wherein each sub-lens comprises ~~comprising~~ an opening ~~(14)~~ for a charged particle beam[[;]] and each sub-lens is adapted to focus a charged particle beam.

2. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ each of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses comprises ~~at least~~ one or more electrodes ~~electrode (18), the electrodes of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses being~~ on a common potential.

3. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ each of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses comprises one or more ~~at least a~~ first and ~~a~~ second electrodes ~~electrode (18, 19)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 3, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the first electrodes of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses are on a common potential and the second electrodes of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses are on a common potential.

5. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the electrostatic lens component for the ~~a plurality of~~ charged particle beams is an immersion lens component for the ~~a plurality of~~ charged particle beams.

6. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the electrostatic lens component for the ~~a plurality of~~ charged particle beams is a retarding lens component for the ~~a plurality of~~ charged particle beams.

7. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system ~~(10; 20)~~ of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the magnetic sub-lenses are radial-gap lenses.

8. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of claims 1 to 6, whereby~~ the magnetic sub-lenses are axial-gap lenses.

9. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of claims 1 to 6, whereby~~ the magnetic sub-lenses are radial-axial-gap lenses.

10. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ a lens field area of the electrostatic sub-lens is below a lens field area of the respective magnetic sub-lens.

11. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of claims 1 to 9, whereby~~ a lens field area of the electrostatic sub-lens is above a lens field area of the respective magnetic sub-lens.

12. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of claims 1 to 9, whereby~~ a lens field area of the electrostatic sub-lens and a respective lens field area of the magnetic sub-lens overlap.

13. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ one electrode ~~(18, 19)~~ of each of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses is on a beam boost potential.

14. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, further ~~(10; 20) according to any of the preceding claims,~~ comprising means ~~(102; 112)~~ for fine focusing.

15. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, further ~~according to any of the preceding claims,~~ comprising an extraction electrode ~~(122)~~ component with an extraction electrode for each of the at least two charged particle beams.

16. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, further ~~according to any of the preceding claims,~~ comprising a scan deflection unit ~~(144, 146; 152)~~.

17. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, further ~~according to any of the preceding claims,~~ comprising an individual scan deflection unit for each of the at least two charged particle beams.

18. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 16, wherein ~~according to any of claims 16 to 17, whereby~~ the scan deflection unit is an in-lens scan deflection unit ~~(152)~~.

19. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of claim 1, further ~~according to any of the preceding claims,~~ comprising a detection unit ~~(162, 174)~~.

20. (Currently Amended) The optical ~~Optical~~ system of ~~according to~~ claim 19, wherein ~~, whereby~~ the detection unit comprises a spectrometer.

21. (Currently Amended) A method ~~Method~~ for focusing at least two charged particle beams on a specimen, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing an optical system comprising: ~~with~~

an electrostatic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having ~~comprising~~ at least two electrostatic sub-lenses;[[, and]]

a magnetic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having ~~comprising~~ at least two magnetic sub-lenses;[[,]] and

at least two separate openings for each of the at least two charged particle beams traveling through the optical system;[[, and]]

controlling a current for an excitation coil of the magnetic lens component, thereby focusing the at least two electron beams; and

controlling at least two potentials of the electrostatic lens component, thereby focusing the at least two electron beams[[;]].

22. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Method according to~~ claim 21, wherein ~~whereby~~ each of the electrostatic sub-lenses is provided with one or more ~~at least a~~ first and ~~a~~ second electrodes ~~electrode~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, further comprising ~~Method according to any of claims 21 to 22,~~ controlling the first electrodes or the second electrodes separately for each of the at least two electrostatic sub-lenses.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~Method according to any of claims 21 to 23,~~ further controlling focusing properties correction means.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~Method according to any of claims 21 to 24,~~ further scanning the at least two charged particle beams over an area of the specimen.

26. (Currently Amended) A multiple ~~Multiple~~ charged particle beam device, comprising:

a charged particle beam source ~~(102)~~;

a detector for detecting secondary particles ~~(162)~~;

beam shaping means ~~(A)~~;

a housing ~~(191)~~ for the charged particle beam column, wherein ~~whereby~~ the

housing can be evacuated;

at least one optical system comprising: ~~(20; 180) according to any of claims 1 to 20,~~

an electrostatic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having at least two electrostatic sub-lenses; and

a magnetic lens component for a plurality of charged particle beams having at least two magnetic sub-lenses, wherein the sub-lenses share a common excitation coil;

wherein the electrostatic and the magnetic lens component form a multi-lens for a plurality of charged particle beams having at least two sub-lenses;

wherein each sub-lens comprises an opening for a charged particle beam; and

wherein each sub-lens is adapted to focus a charged particle beam; and

at least one control unit ~~(7, 8, 9)~~ for the at least one optical system.

27. (Currently Amended) The multiple ~~Multiple~~ charged particle beam device ~~(190) according to~~ of claim 26, further comprising a deflection unit ~~(172a, 172b)~~ for directing the charged particle beam away from the optical axis ~~(11)~~ and redirecting the charged particle beam.

28. (Currently Amended) The multiple ~~Multiple~~ charged particle beam device of claim 27, wherein the deflection unit comprises at least two magnetic deflectors. ~~(172a, 172b).~~